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UTAH STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

CIRCULAR TO HEALTH OFFICERS.

Tuberculosis is a contagious disease communicated directly or indirectly by a person affected therewith.

If the consumptive patient is careful in the observance of precautions, he will not endanger others. If no care is used, he will inevitably menace the lives of all with whom he comes in contact; and it is as a result of such carelessness that the terrible malady has become the most destructive of all diseases.

In order that the efforts of health boards to restrict the spread of tuberculosis may be effective, notification of its presence must be furnished as in other contagious diseases.

Utah was the first state in the union to enact a law requiring physicians and others to report all cases of tuberculosis; but it is to be regretted that compliance with the law has been far from satisfactory notwithstanding the continued efforts of the State Board of Health to enforce it.

Health officers should more fully recognize the importance of the measure; and public sentiment should support their efforts in demanding strict obedience to it.

No embarrassment or hardship to the patient or family is involved. They are furnished by the State Board of Health with a circular of instructions to guide them in their own protection and that of the public.

Utah now boasts of the lowest death rate from tuberculosis in the world, the average being 31 deaths annually per 100,000 population, compared with 161 per 100,000 in the United States at large.

This low rate should be maintained and still further improved, but it cannot be without persistent and faithful efforts.

Numerous victims of the disease, attracted by the climate remove to the State. Of these, many unfortunates are without means and become an especial menace to the public health.

To afford the temporary isolation of these cases until they can be returned to the State responsible for their care, and to protect the public from many resident cases that have no proper facilities for treatment or the exercise of the necessary precautions, a State Sanitorium should be provided. The establishment of an institution of that character has been urged in the last two annual reports of the Secretary of the State Board of Health; and efforts have been made to secure a law providing for the same.

The State Board of Health will again endeavor to secure the enactment of a law for the establishment of a sanitorium at the next session of the legislature; and health officers may promote the public health interests by using their influence with the members of that body to secure their favorable consideration of the proposed bill.

The arguments of those who formerly opposed the measure were based on the assumption that such an Institution would attract indigent consumptives from other States; which argument is without merit for the reason that it should be available for continued occupancy exclusively to residents of the State, and affected persons from without, should be there isolated only until they could be returned to their legal place of residence.

Health officers are reminded of the importance of carefully disinfecting premises from which a person affected with tuberculosis has removed. The process of disinfection should be the same as in other contagious diseases.

November, 1912.

T. B. Beatty, M. D.,
Secretary.